*613 Bedouins, always a minority in Egypt, have been undergoing
178 a transition to peasantry since about 1800. Probably since
179 that time, Bedouin society has been, to use Easton's (1959)
578 emphasis, a "segmentary society" rather than a "segmenting society."

*196 Formal Bedouin categories of kinship are confusing; depending upon the situation they use the concepts of bait, 'ait, 'aiela and qabiila interchangeably. The term bait literally means "house," the term bait al-'Arab may mean "the tent" or "the people of the tent." "People of the tent" [594] may refer to either the nuclear family of one man, or the nuclear families of a man, his brothers and his sons, and [596] their spouses and offspring. In the latter case, the ex-[621] tended family is referred to as the naja'. A naja', or camp, usually consists of three or four tents. The word bait may 196 refer to the tertiary and the sub-tertiary groups, and oc-*613 casionally one might even refer to the secondary group as a bait when he wishes to emphasize the quality of corporateness. The term 'aiela, literally "family," is the word used most often to designate the secondary lineage segment. The diminutive of this word, i.e. 'ait, usually refers to the sub-tertiary group but it commonly designates the secondary group [619] also. The term qabiila, "tribe," is the only word used for the primary and supra-primary lineage groupings. These are 196 the general Bedouin usages and their frequency will vary not

•196 only from area to area but also from person to person.

121 In terms of the Bedouin social structure, it is useful
*613 to discuss politics as a set of authority relations operating
571 in a problem-solving situation. This operation takes place at all levels of the lineage system with the exception of the sub-tertiary group; below the tertiary group level authority is purely a function of certain kinship roles. Since we cannot analytically separate the political aspect of the role "family head" from the moral aspect of the role "father," it seems best to designate this type of authority as being something distinct from political authority. We will call this type of authority either "familial" or "domestic," and "political authority" will be considered to exist in cases where there is some degree of role specialization and role differentiation with respect to decision-making and problem-solving. As I conceptualize it, then, the tertiary group is a political group because it is structurally identified with a corporate office, or institutionalized role of leadership. At the end
[128] of this chapter, and in the next chapter, I will elaborate on this because it is a focal point of the study.

121 Structural principles designed to promote integration
571 in a society also shed light on the degree of coercion and
181 conflict in social "organization." Individuals and groups in society have interests and values which they seek to maximize in the face of competition and opposition from other individ-

582
171 (Patai 1962:Ch. 6).

The point of this is that most of the Middle East's inhabitants are villagers dependent upon agriculture. The dominant form of marriage is not parallel-cousin marriage. As a matter of fact, marriage may or may not be considered exogamous depending upon the level of segmentation at which one wishes to draw the line for his definition of endogamy. Ayoub (1959) suggests that parallel-cousin marriage be considered only as an extreme expression of an overall preference for endogamy. She found in a sample of 514 marriages from a Syrian village that 9.1 per cent of them were with the parallel-cousin while 63.4 per cent were within the secondary group. She concludes from this that intra-lineage marriage is frequent enough that it cannot be accounted for by random mate selection.

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162 In 'Ailit Ma'fas of al-Qasr, out of 197 recorded
*[613] marriages over a period of five generations the frequency of parallel-cousin marriage was 11.1 per cent and marriage within the lineage was 41.6 per cent of the total. Of these 197
[595] marriages, only 39 were cases of polygny and most of these involved a man taking two wives (see Table 5 below).

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114 The confusion over the presence or absence of parallel-
•196 cousin marriage in the Middle East is related to the question of whether or not the researcher and the native are talking about the same thing. In Qasr, for instance, the term

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 116]

582 "parallel cousin" (i.e. bint 'amm) is perfectly interchangeable
114 with the term "parallel-cousin once removed" (i.e. bint ibn
196 'amm, "daughter of the father's brother's son"). After I
[124] had familiarized myself with the genealogies of al-Qasr, I began to realize that many of my informants were using the term bint 'amm to refer to the parallel-cousin once, twice, or even thrice removed. When I pointed this out to one of the Bedouins, he replied: "So what, there is nothing forbidden about this type of marriage." Table 5 shows that this is
582 indeed the case. There are a number of cultural ideals
183 which influence the practice of marriage in al-Qasr: endo-
182 gamy is encouraged because it cements and intensifies corporate ties; exogamy is desired because it widens the web of kinship; men prefer younger women to older women and may utilize their cousin-right privilege to realize this preference.

582 The Bedouins of al-Qasr define the bint 'amm over a
829 wide range. One informant said that "all of the girls of the Awlad 'Ali tribe are my bint 'amm, we are all one." Another said to me, that "any girl of the 'Ali Ahmar is a man's bint 'amm." And yet another informed me that "a man of the Qinaishat tribe will reserve his daughter for me before he will give her to an outsider." Ideologically, a bint 'amm seemed to be anything except the father's brother's daughter. This is quite convenient for the Bedouins because an ideological concept can be placed anywhere along the scale of actuality

582 depending upon the needs of the situation.
829

But one is able to differentiate between the various
582 meanings of bint 'amm in al-Qasr. First of all, the Bedouins
• 196 make an initial dichotamy between the bint 'amm daira (daira =
*613 "homeland") and the bint 'amm shaqiiqa (shaqiiqa = "full sister"). The first term refers to any girl within the primary level of segmentation, i.e., the 'Aishaibat, and the latter term refers to the actual father's brother's daughter. Any marriage within the secondary group, i.e., 'Ailit Ma'fas, is referred to simply as a bint 'amm marriage--even if it is really a bint ibn 'amm marriage. A man has an actual moral claim upon his bint 'amm shaqiiqa: such a marriage is an agreement between their fathers who are brothers. A man cannot claim his bint 'amm daira but he might assume that if she is not claimed by her father's brother's son (ibn 'amm), his claim will be favored over that of an outsider.

582 The differentiation between these two types of cousin role is made in terms of rights and obligations which define social relations in al-Qasr. Social action is based upon these expectations of behavior. In al-Qasr, a man really does claim his bint 'amm shaqiiqa. If his claim is thwarted, he will attempt to do something about it, and whatever the consequences, his group is committed to back him in this
[182] matter. Parallel-cousin marriage may be an important basis
[578] for integration, or it may be the cause of bitter conflict.

*613 of lineage segmentation, ties based upon any of the structural principles may obtain, but they are not ritually legitimated by the principle of blood responsibility. A functional corporate group cannot be defined beyond the secondary level. The Bedouins of al-Qasr make an explicit distinction between a group which is 'asaba and one which is not. The term 'asaba derives from the verb, "to bind," and is translated as "paternal relations" or "agnates." The tertiary and secondary segments are considered to be 'asaba. Only these segments can be represented by an 'aqila.

[666] The 'aqila, the focus of authority in the corporate *613 tertiary group, is an elected head. The concept of 'aqila •196 is itself an expression which entails mutual support and 174 collective responsibility: the concept of 'aqila is equiva- 682 lent to that of corporate group. Wehr (1961) translates the word 'aqila as "a clan committed by unwritten law of the Bedouins to pay bloodwite for each of its members." In pre-Islamic Arabia, the 'aqila must have been "the juristic personality" (Weber 1954:157). In early Islamic Arabia, we know the penal codes of the ancient schools of law came to differentiate between the offender (i.e. the individual) and the 'aqila (i.e. the group) concerning the payment of blood-money. During Umayyad times, the 'aqila was the group listed on the diwaan (account books), and was considered a tribal grouping of some order which was responsible for paying the diiya

*613 (Schacht 1953:207).

• 196 So, in pre-Islamic Arabia and later, the 'aqila and
194 not the culprit was responsible for payment of the diya or
682 for retaliation. And the 'aqila, which means every single corporate member, risked its life in the face of retaliation from without. According to Islamic law, only the killer may be retaliated upon. But in pre-Islamic Arabia and in al-Qasr, any member of the killer's corporate group may be revenged upon. The Bedouins say that revenge should be taken upon the best man of the family, for this will cause the most damage. Both the legal schools of Madina (Maliki) and Kufa recognized the principle of self-help, or collective responsibility, for payment or retaliation in cases of homicide and wounding. And, according to Coulson (1964:49), "they both called the group which shoulders the burden the 'aqila."

*613 The 'aqila in al-Qasr, which is an uncentralized system, is a corporate sole and a political office. It functions both in internal domestic (i.e. within the tertiary segment) authority relations, and at the level of external authority relations. The 'aqila is a symbol of his corporation and, as such, speaks for its members in matters of social regulation and the enforcement of political decisions growing out of conflict situations. Political order in al-Qasr depends
[571] upon the values inculcated and the type of authority exercised within the corporate group (Southall 1956:27). The model of

613 was set for a meeting in which Quadra was to announce his decision.
156 Meanwhile, Qudura stopped attacking Hakim and directed his attack to-
554 ward the inadequacy of Shei'eb as the Aqila.
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The meeting was held two weeks later and all the important people in the area were invited. After dinner was served Qudura announced his agreement with Hakim to become the Aqila of bait Asabei' replacing Shei'eb. Everybody expected Hakim to support Qudura in his claim, but instead Hakim directed his comment to Qudura telling him that there had been a misunderstanding on Qudura's part and that all his message to Qudura was to acknowledge the latter as the Aqila for his own camp alone not for bait Asabei' as a whole as Qudura claimed. This announcement was a surprise to everyone in the meeting since this meant recognizing the camp of Qudura as a separate bait, a result which nobody, including Qudura, had ever anticipated. Qudura was very angry and dissolved the meeting immediately. Ever since that incident, the relationship between
578 Qudura and Hakim has been very unfriendly. Almost all of my informants
156 explained Qudura's failure to show up at the oath as a means of revenge
695 against Hakim who had embarrassed him among the people who attended the
685 meeting. Qudura himself had told me later that the reason for his not
621 coming to the oath was that he was not sure that Rabbu was innocent:
[124]

> Rabbu has been known to do these thins (inform the police) and I cannot trust him. I cannot take a false oath and endanger myself for someone like Rabbuh. Besides, Hakim never came to me to discuss the oath like he did with all the others who were to swear with them. If he had brought his son and come to me before I would have been able to tell whether they were lying or not, and If not, I would have sworn with a clear conscience and without fear. The oath is something that one does not take lightly. It involves the supernatural.

613 When Qudura refused to see Hakim and Shei'eb, Hakim asked Sheikh
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156 Saleh, the Aqila of one of the most powerful baits in the area, to talk
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[196] to Qudura and to tell him that Hakim wanted to show his respect. This means in everyday parlance that Hakim was willing to pay him money. Qudura agreed to meet Hakim the following day.

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[574] On the day of the meeting, to which I was invited, Hakim arrived with his son and gifts of three goats, tea and sugar. One of the goats was slaughtered and supper was prepared for the guests. While the guests were eating, Hakim and Qudura disappeared inside one of the tents for more than an hour. When they finally joined the gathering, Hakim announced that he and Qudura were now brothers and that it was his fault that Qudura was angry because he had accused him of being stupid and misunderstanding the content of the message sent to him after the meeting of the Aggary awawil. "I admit," said Hakim, "that I might have meant at one time and probably said it to sheikh Qudura that I wanted him to be the Aqila of bait Asabei'. Now that I have admitted this, Sheikh Qudura should not have any grudges against me or my son." Then Qudura addressed the gathering and said, in a very cold and dry manner, "I am glad that Hakim has come to this senses and admitted his mistake." The gathering lasted for most of the evening, spent mostly in behind-the-scenes meetings involving Hakim, Qudura and different guests. Then as the last guest left, Shei'eb, who had been inside the tent throughtout the evening came out and said that Hakim was a fool and that Qudura had tricked him into admitting publicly that he had lied and that Qudura still refused to take the oath.

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[521] Qudura's stand created a strong reaction which affected almost all the tribal segments in the area. The case overshadowed any other event and was the main topic of discussion. The reaction was mixed, however.

Cases

The Meaning of Marriage

581 Until marriage the changes in a man's life have been in the nature of
585 an ordered sequence of development from a child to be cared for — the only
342 time in his life when a father, without inhibition, showers on him his love
[593] and affection — to one who, by degrees, makes an increasing contribution to a production unit. Marriage necessitates that a man pitch a tent for himself. With a tent he becomes a potential host and protector of others. The local idiom for marriage is "to set up a tent." It would be quite improper to use
• [196] the verb "to marry" when inquiring whether a marriage has taken place
[195] since this verb also has the meaning of "to have sexual intercourse." Instead the euphemism, "Have you pitched a tent?" is used. The Arabic word for a tent in this context is *Bait*. It is not used to refer to a military tent, nor to the small tent which shelters only a widow. It is reserved for the Bedouin tent, which usually has a wool top, and, most importantly, holds the promise of the continuation of life, whether it shelters a newly married couple, a mature family or young unmarried people. (The word *Bait* represents a complex concept, and it would be too much of a diversion here to discuss the various points of its significance. It is essential to understand that its
[178] meaning is not confined to a tent in the physical sense.) Its top has *Baraka* (divine goodness) in it; the quality of *Haram*, which makes it possible for the tent to be used as a sanctuary, is associated with it and this quality of *Haram* extends, moreover, to the ropes of the tent, so that anyone who clutches them comes under the protection of the owner. In it, the wife must permanently reside and her husband has the legal right to insist on this. In it too, he has the legal right of sexual access to a woman, his wife. Any children
[885] born in it he can claim as his own. With the erection of a tent the son reaches adulthood, and it is in this sense that he can be said to have acquired a domain of his own.

581 Marriage gives a son greater freedom and less dependence on his father
585 in another sense. A second euphemism used for marriage is "making a
[593] relationship," specifically an affinal one. Relationships between a man and
[195] his father-in-law are diverse and are used in various ways in different situations. Here, the particular aspect which needs to be stressed is that a man
606 can cajole his father-in-law, and (through his wife) wealth, in the form
425 of animals, may pass from the former to the latter. Reciprocal gifts are passed
556 between affines on certain occasions, but in addition small amounts may pass which are not connected with the formal occasions of exchanges. Debt
583 lies between them. It begins with the initiation of marriage negotiations,
584 when the suitor's kinsmen take a prescribed number of sheep to present to
606 the girl's father if negotiations are successful. They promise to transfer bride-wealth[9] to the girl's father. A few weeks after the marriage, the hus-

[191] [9] I use the word "bride-wealth" because it has become so familiar in the literature, but the only similarity between the *Sahiba* of the Bedouin and the bride-wealth of